

October 2010

DRAFT: Conversion of Seven Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences Concentrations into Degrees

University of Washington Tacoma

Moderate Degree Change Proposal

Introduction

The University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) seeks approval to convert seven concentrations within its existing Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies degree into the following Bachelor of Arts degrees, beginning Winter 2011:

1. Bachelor of Arts in American Studies
2. Bachelor of Arts in Arts, Media, and Culture
3. Bachelor of Arts in Communications
4. Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies
5. Bachelor of Arts in Ethnic, Gender, and Labor Studies
6. Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics
7. Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

The concentrations currently serve a total of 566 FTE students. Program planners estimate that after the concentrations are converted to degrees the number of FTE students will increase to 595 by 2013. The degrees would continue to be housed within UWT's Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences (IAS) program, which has formed the arts and sciences core at UWT since it was founded.

Proposed Change Description and Rationale

The first degree offered when the campus was opened in 1990 was a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies. As the program evolved, concentrations were added and eventually the degree name was changed to a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences. Additional concentrations were added as the campus grew. Concentrations, rather than separate majors, were initially implemented because the programs were small and to promote the interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum by preventing the creation of academic silos.

Seven concentrations, however, are now large enough to merit separate major degree status. The proposed changes would benefit students who have expressed concern that graduating with a concentration, rather than a major degree, diminishes their ability to gain employment or be admitted to graduate school.

The proposed conversions also would reinforce the emergence of IAS as a more mature unit. The majors would continue to be deeply interdisciplinary, reinforcing the commitment of IAS to distinguish itself as a leader in interdisciplinary degree program development.

The conversions are essentially name changes. They would not require any new courses or resources and would not alter the delivery of the programs in any way. The conversions have been approved by the faculty and Director of IAS, the UWT Curriculum Committee, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Tri-Campus Council of the UW Faculty Senate, and the UW Curriculum Committee.

Currently enrolled students would be allowed to complete their courses of study as either concentrations or majors. Assuming that the conversions are approved, the concentrations would no longer admit students after Fall 2010.

External Review

The proposals were reviewed by the following external reviewers:

1. Bachelor of Arts in American Studies - Dr. Carolyn Haynes, Director, University Honors Program and Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Department of English, Miami University¹.
2. Bachelor of Arts in Arts, Media, and Culture - Ms. Bonnie Schock, M.F.A., Program Co-Director, MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts Program, Washington Residency Site, Goddard College.
3. Bachelor of Arts in Communications - Dr. Eileen Meehan, Professor, Department of Radio-Television, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
4. Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies - Dr. Paulette Bierzychudek, Chair and Professor of Biology and Professor of Natural Science, Lewis and Clark College; and Dr. Linda Fink, Professor of Ecology, Sweet Briar College.
5. Bachelor of Arts in Ethnic, Gender, and Labor Studies - Dr. Abby Ferber, Co-Director, Women's and Ethnic Studies; Director, the Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion; Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.
6. Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics - Dr. Hart Hodges, Director, Center for Economic and Business Research; Associate Professor, Economics, Western Washington University.
7. Bachelor of Arts in Psychology - Dr. Beverly Greene, Diplomate in Clinical Psychology, American Board of Professional Psychology; Professor of Psychology, St. John's University.

¹ Located in Oxford, Ohio.

Although some reviewers made a few specific suggestions, each reviewer indicated the content of the concentration he or she reviewed was generally appropriate to be offered as a major and the proposed degree title was appropriate. Program planners responded thoughtfully to reviewer suggestions.

Staff Analysis

Each concentration's established track record of enrolling and graduating students indicates sufficient student demand; however, many IAS students have expressed strong preference for majors, rather than concentrations. UWT recruiting personnel say prospective students do not understand what concentrations are, and anecdotal evidence suggests many prospective students are dissuaded from matriculating into IAS because of this.

The proposed conversions would benefit both students and employers by clearly communicating the academic focus of each course of study. They would benefit the community by enhancing UWT's ability to recruit high-caliber students.

Staff Recommendation

After careful review of the proposal and supporting materials, staff recommends approval of the following degrees at the University of Washington Tacoma:

- Bachelor of Arts in American Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Arts, Media, and Culture
- Bachelor of Arts in Communications
- Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Ethnic, Gender, and Labor Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics
- Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

The Higher Education Coordinating Board's Education Committee considered the proposal and recommended approval by the full Board.

RESOLUTION NO. 10-24

WHEREAS, The University of Washington Tacoma proposes to offer Bachelor of Arts degrees in American Studies; Arts, Media, and Culture; Communications; Environmental Studies; Ethnic, Gender, and Labor Studies; Politics, Philosophy, and Economics; and Psychology; and

WHEREAS, The degrees would result from the conversion of existing concentrations within the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences; and

WHEREAS, The conversions would benefit students and employers by clearly indicating the academic focus of each course of study; and

WHEREAS, The conversions would benefit the community by enhancing UWT's ability to recruit high-caliber students; and

WHEREAS, Each conversion is a moderate degree change;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Bachelor of Arts in American Studies; Bachelor of Arts in Arts, Media, and Culture; Bachelor of Arts in Communications; Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies; Bachelor of Arts in Ethnic, Gender, and Labor Studies; Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics; and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology; effective October 20, 2010.

Adopted:

October 20, 2010

Attest:

Jesús Hernandez, Chair

Roberta Greene, Secretary